

HOW URGENT COURIERS USED MOBILE APPLICATIONS TO SLASH COSTS and GROW ITS BUSINESS »



ENABLING GROWTH

Bottlenecks are the enemy of growth. What's more, if your business involves delivering packages around a traffic-clogged city, any bottleneck in dispatch can put a serious brake on your performance.

» *INCREASE IN COURIER
PRODUCTIVITY BY 1 HOUR
PER DAY!*

Urgent Couriers had built a successful business at the premium end of the market, but by 2003 it was becoming impossible to push the business model any further. Simply adding more dispatchers would add complexity to the management of resources, and make the whole process more disjointed. What they needed was a system that could show each courier's location in real time and allow HQ to allocate jobs more efficiently.



SMARTER DATA

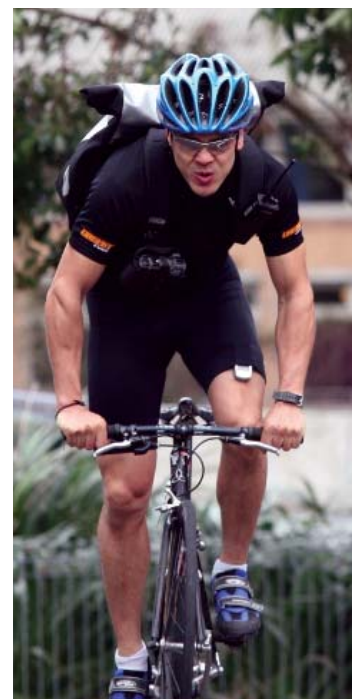
Urgent Couriers Managing Director Steve Bonnici is a strong believer in using technology to stay ahead. Since 1995 he has worked with Sandfield Associates to develop a range of software tailored to the needs of Urgent's business.

Steve and his team looked at buying an off-the-shelf solution, but soon realised none of these would prove more economical. On top of that, none of the packages on offer came with GPS tracking, which was critical to addressing the dispatch bottleneck.

Having reviewed the market, Urgent decided that only a custom-built solution was the way forward. Going the custom-made route would also allow them to retain flexibility for future developments, while protecting their intellectual property. In a market as cutthroat as courier deliveries, it's vital to keep your competitive edge out of other companies' hands.

» *A SCALABLE AND EFFICIENT
DISPATCHING OPERATION*

Working closely with Sandfield Associates, Steve's team settled on a new system with Hewlett-Packard handheld devices that not only capture electronic signatures but also contain a GPS. For the first time, Urgent could see exactly where all its couriers were, along with the colour-coded status of jobs. Dispatchers were able to track couriers on screen and organise pick-ups to maximise efficiency.



“Sandfield’s team are extremely good at what they do in terms of grasping the business issue and coming up with ideas.”

Managing Director Steve Bonnici



The new system, called Mars, is removing headaches at head office and slicing over \$100,000 p.a. from overheads. Productivity has taken a huge leap, with each courier saving up to an hour a day compared to the previous process. The system is also lowering costs for owner-drivers and giving customers a speedier service. It’s a win for everyone involved.

» \$100K PER ANNUM SAVINGS

Most importantly, it gives Urgent Couriers a unique advantage in the marketplace. “This is going to be massively powerful,” Steve predicts. “No-one else in our industry has got this type of information.”

WHY SANDFIELD?

Urgent Couriers has a relationship with Sandfield Associates dating back to 1995. The two companies share a vision of the way technology can be used to deliver solid business gains at the point of use.

“The model we run – that we own our software and can develop it further – is a good one,” Steve says. “Our systems are business-critical tools which allow us to be where we are in the marketplace, and we retain the ability to make changes that give us leverage to increase the size of the business.

» DRAMATICALLY IMPROVED CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

“Sandfield’s team have a really good understanding of our system. Now when we put an idea to them, they know the system well enough that they will come back and say: ‘What if we do it this way...?’

“They identify the issues and get to the crux of the problem – they’re pretty pragmatic. Sandfield’s team are extremely good at what they do in terms of grasping the business issue and coming up with ideas.”



THE TECHNOLOGY

Sandfield’s mobile solution integrated the following elements:

- Despatch Manager (MS Office front end)
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft .Net Framework v2.0 (sending and receiving data from handheld mobile devices)
- Microsoft Message Queue
- Sandfield Mobile Updater (maintaining handheld mobile devices via website)
- Open source MapServer
- Astro – Sandfields Mobile Application Framework
- PostGIS open source spatial database